

Local electoral arrangements finalised for Bristol City Council

12th May 2015

The independent Local Government Boundary Commission for England has published its final recommendations for new electoral arrangements for Bristol City Council.

Today's publication follows a ten-week public consultation on its draft proposals and draws new boundaries for each council ward across Bristol.

The Commission's final recommendations propose that Bristol should be represented by 70 city councillors in the future: the same as the current arrangement. The recommendations also propose that those councillors should represent five three-member wards, 26 two-member wards and three single-member wards across the city.

Max Caller, Chair of the Commission, said, "We are extremely grateful to people across Bristol who took the time and effort to send us their views. The Commission considered every piece of evidence it received before finalising these recommendations.

"Across the city, we have sought to balance the views expressed to us by local people with the criteria we must apply when we are deciding on new electoral arrangements. As such, we believe these recommendations deliver electoral equality for voters as well as reflecting the identities of communities in Bristol."

In response to representations made to it on the draft recommendations, the Commission has made changes to the draft proposals it originally put forward for consultation in December 2014. For example, in the North of the city, the Commission has altered its proposal to divide the Westbury-on-Trym area between wards. Instead, the final recommendations propose that the area should be part of a three-member Westbury-on-Trym & Henleaze ward. During public consultation on the draft recommendations, strong local evidence was provided that dividing Westbury-on-Trym would have severed well-established community ties so the Commission has changed its proposal to keep the area united in a single ward.

Elsewhere in the city, the Commission has made other changes to its boundary proposals to reflect local views. As such, the boundary between Bishopston ward and Redland ward has been changed so that areas including Cambridge Road and Clevedon Road are included in Redland ward. Similarly, and in response to local views, the boundary between Easton and Lawrence Hill wards has been amended so that it avoids dividing the Barton Hill community.

In the western part of Bristol, the boundary between the proposed Easton and Lockleaze wards has been amended so that Napier Road is included in the Easton ward where it shares stronger community ties. The Commission has also listened to the responses submitted during consultation and its final recommendations ensure that the 5102 Apartments building is wholly contained in the Central ward. The Commission's final recommendations also ensure that all properties along Marlborough Hill Place are included in the Cotham ward rather than divided between Cotham and Central wards as previously proposed.

In the eastern part of Bristol, the Commission has responded positively to local feedback on its recommendations for a Brislington East and Brislington West ward. As a result, the Commission now proposes that the boundary between the two wards should run along Brislington Brook which means that St Anne's Terrace will now be included in the Brislington West ward.

In The Southmead area of the city, the Commission considered alternative patterns of wards to those set out in the draft recommendations in response to local feedback. The Commission has amended its draft proposals so that all properties on Home Ground will be included in the Southmead ward. The Commission investigated more substantial changes to the ward such as adding the area which lies to the south east of Doncaster Road in the Henleaze ward. However, all the alternative options explored would either lead to poor levels of electoral equality for voters or create arbitrary boundaries that divide distinct communities.

Similarly, the Commission investigated ways in which its proposal for a three-member Avonmouth & Lawrence Weston ward could be divided into separate wards. However, no alternative pattern would deliver electoral fairness to voters at the same time as reflecting the shape of communities in that part of Bristol.

The Commission also confirms its draft recommendation for a two-member Bishopsworth ward as final. The Commission received evidence both in support and against its proposal for this part of the city. In particular, the Commission investigated ways in which the boundary between Bishopsworth ward and Hartcliffe ward could be amended to run along King George's Road. However, this pattern of wards would have led to low levels of electoral fairness for voters in both wards.

Elsewhere in the city, the Commission has made changes to the names of wards it put forward in its draft recommendations as a result of responses to submissions made by local people and organisations. As such, Hartcliffe ward is re-named Hartcliffe & Withywood ward and Ashley & Stokes Croft ward becomes Ashely ward. In addition, Bishopston ward is re-named Bishopston & Ashley Down ward and Clifton West ward becomes Clifton ward.

Full details of the final recommendations are available on the Commission's website at www.lgbce.org.uk.

The proposed new arrangements must now be implemented by Parliament. A draft order – the legal document which brings into force the recommendations – will be laid in Parliament in the coming months. The draft Order provides for the new electoral arrangements to come into force at the council elections in 2016.

Ends

For further information contact the Commission's press office on: 0330 500 1525 / 1250 or email: press@lgbce.org.uk

Notes to editors:

1. The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is responsible for reviewing local authority electoral arrangements, e.g. defining boundaries for local elections and the number of councillors to be elected and – separately - for conducting reviews of local government external boundaries and structure.
2. Full details of the Commission's final recommendations (including maps) can be viewed at: www.lgbce.org.uk/current-reviews/south-west/bristol/bristol or: <https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/node/3535>.